



STATE OF IOWA

TERRY E. BRANSTAD, GOVERNOR
KIM REYNOLDS, LT. GOVERNOR

STEM ADVISORY COUNCIL BROADBAND COMMITTEE

Co-Chair John Carver, Superintendent, Howard-Winneshiek Community School District
Co-Chair Robert von Wolfradt, Chief Information Officer, State of Iowa
Amy Kuhlers, Program Manager, Connect Iowa
Robert Denson, President, Des Moines Area Community College
Dave Duncan, President, Iowa Telecommunication Association
Philip Groner, Iowa Communication Network
Karl Hehr, Director of Technology Services, Ames Community Schools District
Galen Howsare, Chief Financial Officer, Iowa Association of School Boards
Karen Randall, Keystone Area Education Association
Michael Sadler, CenturyLink, Assistant VP for Public Policy
Larry Siegel, Iowa School Finance and Information System Services
Jeff Weld, Executive Director, Governor's STEM Advisory Council
Josh Byrnes, State Representative, District 14
Steven Soddors, State Senator, District 36

STEM ADVISORY COUNCIL BROADBAND COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes

September 26, 2014 – 10:00 - Noon
Iowa Utilities Board, 1375 E Court Ave, Des Moines, IA
Conference Room 1-2

Committee Members Present:

John Carver
Galen Howsare
Amy Kuhlers
Dave Duncan
Rob Denson

Robert von Wolfradt
Phillip Groner
Michael Sadler
Steve Soddors

Committee Members Absent:

Karen Randall
Josh Byrnes
Jeff Weld

Larry Siegel
Karl Hehr

Other Attendees:

Phil Wise, Iowa Dept. of Education
Ben Hammes, Governor's Administration
Bill Heckroth, IA State Assoc. of County Supervisors
Bill Peard, IA Cable & Telcom Assoc.
Shawn Wagner, Connect Iowa, ISICSB

Phillip Brown, Connected Nation
Anna Hyatt-Crozier, House Dem. Research
Suzanne Smith, Iowa Utilities Board
Vince Hanrahan, Iowa Utilities Board
Dave Daack, Connect Iowa

Other Attendees (via phone):

Erik Skovgard, Lincoln Savings Bank
Charles Bruggemann, Windstream Comm.
Fred Eastman, Mercy Health Network

Beth Canuteson, AT&T
Scott Saunders, ISU





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I. Call to Order and Introductions:

Meeting called to order at 10:05 by Co-Chair, Carver. Committee members and guest attendees offered introductions.

II. Approval of 9-26-14 Agenda:

Duncan moved to approve the agenda, Denson seconded, unanimously approved.

III. Approval of 11-27-13 Minutes:

Duncan moved to approve the minutes from the 11-27-13 meeting and Groner seconded, unanimously approved.

IV. Review of Committee charge and timelines:

Carver reviewed the three directives given to the Broadband Committee, with the first being the December, 2013 delivery of policy recommendations (completed); development and delivery of a long-term broadband strategy to the Governor's office by 1-1-15, and identifying potential public-private funding. Reiterated that there are three components to a fiber network, the backbone, middle mile access and last mile access, and all three components work together.

V. Review of current broadband status and need:

Iowa has a lot of lit and dark fiber in the state, and has over 200 broadband providers. The Iowa Communications Network is also a component of broadband in the state, connecting many of Iowa's community anchor institutions.

During last legislative session there was much debate on the recommendations put forth to the Governor, and he suggested those recommendation still have merit and we move forward with the addition of edits if necessary. It is crucial if Iowa is to be a player globally, it is imperative a broadband solution is found.

Carver placed a video created by John Deere (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jEh5-zZ9jUg>). After video remarked that there is a growing need for better connectivity in farmland areas for newer technologies in farm equipment to utilize. This would be wireless/mobile, but there must be a fiber backbone.

There are three components for consideration in planning, broadband access, adoption and use. He commented on recent issues in his district relating to a required online school registration this year, as well as the need for an Apple ID, which required a big learning curve for many parents. Additionally, area industries now require online applications, and many of the potential workforce is not able to complete due to digital literacy issues. Iowa has more digital devices for students than any other state in nation. This is a workforce we want to keep in Iowa.





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Going forward we need to give consideration as to how we can assist in getting legislation passed, and to get a collaborative message coming from all players. Feels if we can create an effective strategy, funding will follow.

VI. Overview of broadband activity in the 2014 legislative session:

Sodders provided a recap of the recent legislative session. Believes the House, Senate and Governor's office worked hard at getting something accomplished, but there were some items that bogged down process including cell tower siting and ICN use. He intends to refile the final Senate bill draft, but suggests looking a separating out ICN use, cell tower siting and possible other issue area into separate bills. He received a suggestion that private providers be allowed to create access points along the ICN, not just relying on current access points. He is more concerned with getting students connected before farmland, and if focus is placed on cropland access we may lose focus on other areas. It needs to be reviewed, but should not be focus of recommendations and legislation. There was a good legislative base with the recommendations provided, and if we can take out the issues and begin with what was agreed on, a bill might pass fairly quickly. Sodders will provide his final draft of the Senate bill for all committee members to review for content and possible updates.

Carver asked if the recommendation for a central point of contact had been an issue. Sodders thinks there was support on all sides for that component.

Groner reviewed the ICN 2.0 proposal, which was to open up ICN for private wholesale access, not end-user access, which is what the committee recommended. He's not sure the Governor's office will include that in the legislation this year, if there isn't much support from the private sector to use.

Duncan thanked Sodders for the work he put forth on the legislation last session. Agrees with the need to focus on the important, and remove distractions. He agrees that connectivity for education is important, per Connect Iowa findings, there are still 113,000 students without access to the Internet at home. We also need to take speed thresholds into consideration, and again, be bold in recommendations, providing some direction for providers on the home/school connections.

Sodders also commented that in meetings with providers, money for build is always a key issue, noting it was stated that the minimum number of 20 new subscribers would be needed in an area before any build was considered. We will need to look at a big outlay of funds if this is a priority. Additionally, costs for subscribing need to be considered. If you have access, but can't afford to subscribe, it is an issue.

Denson asked if there have been any studies on ROI. Duncan has some information on financial breakdown of costs and will forward this information to the committee.

Carver remarked that maybe we should consider rural electrification as a model, bringing up the Tennessee Valley Authority as an example. He also shared some comments vendors have provided to him. One provider is interested in servicing an area with a wired option, but the current provider undercuts costs to keep them out of the market, and then raises costs again in a few months. The provider would like to see a level playing field considered for all providers.





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VII. Overview of federal initiatives affecting Iowa:

Phillip Brown, Connected Nation's Director of State/Federal Policy and Broadband Planning, provided an overview of several federal broadband initiatives that affect Iowa. (See PPT attachment).

Carver asked how information on the federal initiatives, especially the Rural Broadband Experiments (RBE), can be accessed. Brown informed that Connected Nation provides Briefs and other information regularly and it is available on the Connected Nation website. Specifically relating to the Rural Broadband Experiments, the first response was to file Expressions of Interest in the program and 55 EOI's were filed from Iowa. Projects came from small to very large providers and for amounts from \$250,00 to \$40M, with the total of all filed over \$400M. The next step was the application process, which is now underway through October 15. There is no requirement to be a designated Eligible Telecommunications Carrier (ETC) to apply, but will need to be prior to funding if awarded. The overall amount of \$100M for the national program is not much, but the program is designed to help the FCC gather information on possible best practices for structuring programs in the long-term.

Duncan noted that the RBE will be a total fund of \$100M over a 10 year period, not \$100M per year.

VIII. Next steps for long-term planning:

Carver advised committee members to review recommendations prior to next meeting, to reach a committee consensus on building on the recommendations as the foundation for strategy. The Connect Iowa website has information for reference, including the new business survey results, household adoption survey and availability numbers. Duncan will provide on ROI. Information on the final House and Senate bills will be distributed for committee review

Kuhlers provided an overview of the recent 2014 Connect Iowa business survey. Some key findings: 81% of businesses are now utilizing broadband on a daily basis; and 31% of businesses note they would like increased broadband speeds, but are unable to obtain them.

Sodders commented that finding items of relevance for using broadband that could specifically engage the older population to adopt should be considered.

Carver suggested as the political climate increases in Iowa, broadband should be a topic of conversation from all political sides, but in lieu of just touting digital literacy, politicians should be asked to define 21st century education. They should be provided examples of what this looks like and examples should be lifted up when the national press is in Iowa to cover elections.

Sadler informed the committee about the recent Des Moines ordinance vote to increase right-of-way fees up to 10 times the current rate. The proposed increase is a strong deterrent to broadband growth and counter to committee recommendations for communities easing barriers to broadband expansion. The vote has currently been tabled.

Groner provided members with an overview of the recent National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) regional meeting in Minneapolis, specifically on the recent successful efforts by the state





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of Minnesota to pass legislation appropriating \$20M to create a broadband division and provide infrastructure planning. Additionally, the Minnesota legislature has mandated the definition of high-speed broadband for that state, 10-20 Mbps download and 5-10 Mbps upload speeds.

Von Wolfradt commented that the efforts put forth for legislation in 2014, although failed, have helped to increase legislative broadband knowledge, which should be helpful going forward to the next session.

Howsare suggested in lieu of concentrating on connecting cropland, the state looks at connecting every student. New online student assessments will require that all schools in the state have access to enough capacity for classrooms of students to access the Internet simultaneously. This is currently not a reality. Without robust connectivity, teachers will lose out in real-time data needed to help students achieve.

Kuhlers reminded members that we also keep the FirstNet interoperable network in mind, in addition to the other federal initiatives.

Discussion was held on timing for the next meeting, with a consensus to meet soon after the election. Kuhlers will send a calendar schedule out to members to determine date.

Public Comments:

Wise: Commented that the legislature should continue to include changes to the infrastructure funding proposed that would open the door to fund K-14 broadband connectivity. He echoed the importance of getting access for all students at the home level, and the importance of robust broadband for all schools as the new online assessment process nears.

Wagner: Speaking as a citizen, not a representative of an organization, Wagner informed that he had written a letter to the Des Moines Council in a negative response to the recent proposed ordinance to increase ROW fees for providers and other utilities. Reaffirming he felt this action runs counter to removing barriers for growth. Also added that robust wireless broadband for public safety and first responders is extremely important, and currently many first responders have very limited access. He suggests we look not at how much it will cost to obtain access, but rather on what the cost of not having access is, in terms of loss of economic growth, out-migration of population, possible injury or loss of life in a public safety situation, etc.

Eastman: Commented on the importance of broadband for telehealth initiatives, especially as Iowa has an aging population. There is a larger issue at hand than just looking at educational needs. There is also other proposed legislation at the medical board level that the committee should be aware of, which if passed, would be detrimental to supporting and expanding telemedicine efforts.

IX. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn was made by Denson, seconded by Sadler, unanimously approved.

